

What is claimed is:

1. A method of creating a model of a process, comprising:  
identifying activities that comprise the process;  
identifying measurable drivers for each of the activities;  
costing the drivers;  
representing a relationship between various drivers to reflect interdependence between activities; and  
building a function that represents the process by using the relationships.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of building a function includes the steps of representing each activity as a function of its drivers, and using certain of said activity representations in said function representative of the process.
3. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising the steps of optimizing the function, and using the results from said optimization step to revise the function.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of identifying measurable drivers includes the step of identifying economic and non-economic drivers.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of costing the drivers includes identifying at least one of fixed and variable components.
6. The method of claim 5 additionally comprising the step of identifying drivers for said fixed and variable components and costing said drivers for said fixed and variable components.
7. A method of creating a model of a process, comprising:  
identifying activities that comprise the process;  
identifying measurable drivers for each of the activities;  
costing the drivers;  
representing each activity as a function of its drivers;  
identifying drivers used in more than one activity;  
representing the relationship between said identified drivers to reflect interdependence between activities; and  
building a function that represents the process by using the relationships.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the step of building a function includes the step of using certain of said activity representations in said function representative of the process.

9. The method of claim 7 additionally comprising the steps of optimizing the function, and using the results from said optimization step to revise the function.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein said step of identifying measurable drivers includes the step of identifying economic and non-economic drivers.

11. The method of claim 7 wherein said step of costing the drivers includes identifying at least one of fixed and variable components.

12. The method of claim 11 additionally comprising the step of identifying drivers for said fixed and variable components and costing said drivers for said fixed and variable components.

13. A method, comprising:  
identifying activities that comprise a process;  
identifying measurable drivers for each of the activities;  
costing the drivers into at least one of fixed and variable components;  
identifying drivers used in more than one activity;  
representing the relationship between said identified drivers to reflect interdependence between activities; and  
building a function that represents the process by using the relationships.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of building a function includes the steps of representing each activity as a function of its drivers, and using certain of said activity representations in said function representative of the process.

15. The method of claim 13 additionally comprising the steps of optimizing the function, and using the results from said optimization step to revise the function.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein said step of identifying measurable drivers includes the step of identifying economic and non-economic drivers.

17. The method of claim 13 additionally comprising the step of identifying drivers for said fixed and variable components and costing said drivers for said fixed and variable components.

18. A computer readable medium encoded with a computer program embodying a model of a process of the type comprised of a plurality of activities, comprising:

a series of instructions expressing the process as a function of variables that are drivers for more than one activity.

19. The medium of claim 18 wherein the drivers include economic and non-economic drivers.

20. The medium of claim 18 wherein the variables include fixed and variable components of said drivers.

21. A system, comprising:

a computer;

input and output devices in communication with said computer, and

a memory encoded with a computer program embodying a model of a process of the type comprised of a plurality of activities, said computer program comprising a series of instructions expressing the process as a function of variables that are drivers for more than one activity.

22. The system of claim 21 wherein the drivers include economic and non-economic drivers.

23. The system of claim 21 wherein the variables include fixed and variable components of said drivers.

24. A computer readable medium encoded with a computer program embodying a model of a process of the type comprised of a plurality of activities, comprising:

a series of instructions expressing the process in terms of variables that are drivers for more than one activity and variables for drivers for a single activity.

25. The medium of claim 24 wherein the drivers include economic and non-economic drivers.

26. The medium of claim 24 wherein the variables include fixed and variable components of said drivers.

27. A system, comprising:

a computer;

input and output devices in communication with said computer, and  
a memory encoded with a computer program embodying a model of a process of the type comprised of a plurality of activities, said computer program comprising a series of instructions expressing the process in terms of variables that are drivers for more than one activity and variables for drivers for a single activity.

28. The system of claim 27 wherein the drivers include economic and non-economic drivers.

29. The system of claim 27 wherein the variables include fixed and variable components of said drivers.

30. A method of optimizing a process, comprising:  
selecting at least one objective; and  
minimizing, for said selected objective, a function that represents the process in terms of variables that are drivers for more than one activity within the process.

31. The method of claim 30 additionally comprising the step of reconstructing the physical model based on the results of said minimizing step.

32. The method of claim 30 additionally comprising the step of selecting a set of constraints to be used in said minimizing step.

33. A method of optimizing a process, comprising:  
selecting at least one objective; and  
minimizing, for said selected objective, a function that represents the process in terms of variables that are drivers for more than one activity within the process and variables that are drivers for a single activity within the process.

34. The method of claim 33 additionally comprising the step of reconstructing the physical model based on the results of said minimizing step.

35. The method of claim 33 additionally comprising the step of selecting a set of constraints to be used in said minimizing step.

36. A computer readable medium encoded with instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform a method comprising:  
selecting at least one objective; and  
minimizing, for said selected objective, a function that represents a process in terms of variables that are drivers for more than one activity within the process.

37. The computer readable medium of claim 36 wherein said method additionally comprises the step of reconstructing the physical model based on the results of said minimizing step.

38. The computer readable medium of claim 36 wherein said method additionally comprises the step of selecting a set of constraints to be used in said minimizing step.

39. A computer readable medium encoded with instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform a method comprising:

selecting at least one objective; and

minimizing, for said selected objective, a function that represents a process in terms of variables that are drivers for more than one activity within the process and variables that are drivers for a single activity within the process.

40. The computer readable medium of claim 39 wherein said method additionally comprises the step of reconstructing the physical model based on the results of said minimizing step.

41. The computer readable medium of claim 39 wherein said method additionally comprises the step of selecting a set of constraints to be used in said minimizing step.